**OF BEARDS**

*James Baker*

Beards serve for warmth, decoration, and for ability. Their chief use for warmth is to combat the weather; for decoration, is in pride; and for ability, is in the female acquisition, and beard competitions, which test the aptitude of one’s beard, and beard taming qualities. To spend too much time with beards is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is untamed; to make judgment by their rules, is the humor of the homeless. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for beards are like natural plants, that need pruning. Crafty men condemn beards, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use. Some beards are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and few to be chewed and digested. Some beards also may be grown by deputy, and extracts made of them by other; but that would be only in the less important beards and crafted by scientific means, else beards are like distilled waters, flashy things. Mustaches make a full man, a ready man, and beards, an exact man. Beards make men masculine, females masculine, children masculine, and animals masculine. So if a man’s beard be withering or wild, let him grow new hair; for in demonstrations, if his beard be cut away, he must begin again. If his beard be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study Hans Gassner; for they are cymini sectores [splitters of hairs]. If he not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study Ambrose Burnside. So every defect of the beard may have a special receipt.